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**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

To: Renata B. Hesse, Antitrust Division, US Dept of Justice

I would like to submit a comment on the Microsoft settlement proposal.

I believe the settlement must include a very strong provision assuring inter-operability.

I believe it is the responsibility of the U.S. Government to drive this process, as it will not happen without U.S. Government leadership.

When railroads were first being built, there were no standards.

Different rail lines were built with different guages.

Each community had its own local time.

There wasn't any such thing as a standard guage, or a standard time zone.

It proved impossible to serve the public interest without governmentally enforced standardization.

A standard track guage was agreed upon.

The U.S. Government created and imposed Standard Time Zones to ease the problem of railroad scheduling.

You now have a similar responsibility in software.

Unless the U.S. Government mandates inter-operability, the Sherman Act will, for all practical purposes, become a dead letter with respect to the software industry.

Inter-operability protects the consumer, and it protects competition, and it's the only meaningful way to apply the Sherman Act to this vital industry.

Inter-operability means that files created by one application must be readable by the next.

Regardless of who the application creators are.

Spreadsheet files must be equally readable by all software applications.

Word processing files must be equally readable by all word processing applications.

It's the software equivalent of standard guages and standard time zones.

If you don't establish and enforce an interoperability rule, you'll dry up the market for smaller scale competitors and turn the market over to its biggest player.

You'll give a de facto green light to monopoly.

Thank you for your consideration.

I look forward to the DOJ exercising leadership that protects America's strong commitment to competitive capitalism, that honors America's

enduring hostility toward monopoly.

Sincerely yours,  
Steven H. Johnson  
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